

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2007, AT 7:00 P.M.
EDINA CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
4801 WEST 50TH STREET**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kojetin, Chris Rofidal, Lou Blemaster, Connie Fukuda, Laura Benson, Karen Ferrara, Jean Rehkamp Larson, and Sara Rubin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nancy Scherer

STAFF PRESENT: Joyce Repya, Associate Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Vogel, Preservation Consultant
Wayne Houle, City Engineer
Jesse Struve, Utility Engineer
Paul Pasko, Short Elliott Hendrickson - SEH (utility consultant)
Mike Kotila, Short Elliott Hendrickson - SEH (traffic consultant)

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: September 11, 2007

Member Rofidal moved approval of the Minutes from the September 11, 2007 meeting. Member Rehkamp Larson seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

II. COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT - Survey Progress Report – September:

Consultant Vogel explained that work continued on updating and reorganizing the inventory of heritage resources in the Country Club District. Final preparations were made for the National Historic Preservation Conference field session in Edina, to be held on October 4.

Some recommendations relating to the number of contributing heritage resources in the district and revisions to the plan of treatment were prepared for discussion at the Heritage Preservation Board meeting on October 9.

Mr. Vogel stated that the Country Club District derives its historical significance from being a unified entity composed of more than 500 individual heritage resources. The quality of significance is the result of the interrelationship of the houses and streetscapes, which together convey a sense of the district as a cohesive historic environment. The primary heritage preservation resource is the planned neighborhood designed and built under the auspices of the Thorpe Brothers Realty Co. The component heritage resources (houses, streets,

sidewalks, trees, and open spaces), which are relatively equal in importance, are united historically by Thorpe's design plan for the development of the district, which is the basis of the district's Heritage Landmark designation and the focal point of its plan of treatment.

For purposes of design review, it is critically important that we determine which houses contribute to the overall significance of the district, and which do not. As a practical matter, the city needs to ensure that every house that adds to the historic qualities of the district is afforded the same level of protection against the adverse effects of teardowns and new construction. To do this, we must reach some kind of consensus on what constitutes a heritage preservation resource (i.e., a "contributing" property) within the district boundaries.

Vogel pointed out that the overwhelming majority of the homes in the district were constructed between 1924 and 1944, when Thorpe Bros. controlled development in Country Club, including the architecture of individual homes. Unless its principal (street) facade has been substantially altered from its original appearance, a house built prior to 1945 would have to be classified as a contributing resource, regardless of its architectural style or aesthetic value. Furthermore, Consultant Vogel opined that in order to qualify as a contributing resource in the Country Club District, a house built after 1944 would need to meet one of the Heritage Landmark criteria for significance by being associated with an important historic context and by retaining historic integrity of those architectural features necessary to convey its significance. Individual significance or high aesthetic values is not required, as most of the homes constructed before 1945 also lack individual distinction.

Mr. Vogel then recommended adopting the following policy with respect to evaluating Country Club homes constructed after 1944: To be considered a contributing resource, a house must:

- 1) Be more than 50 years old;
- 2) Embody the basic form, plan, and materials characteristic of one of the traditional early 20th century period revival or "American Movement" architectural styles; and
- 3) Retain historic integrity of the primary (street) facade.

The style classifications encompassed by criteria #2 include: Colonial Revival, Tudor, French Eclectic, Italian Renaissance, Mission, Spanish Eclectic, Prairie, and Modern (after McAlester and McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*). Vogel added that Minimal Traditional and Ranch style homes should also be included because these styles reflect popular house forms built from the 1930s through 1950s. Although they share little of the architectural character of the homes built in the district in the 1920s and 1930s, these later homes still show the influence of Thorpe's original plan of development; they are also important because they represent changing standards and tastes in the community during the last phase of its development (which ended in the late 1950s—only a relative

handful of new homes were built in the district after 1960). The Edina Historic Context Study provides the framework for dealing with these properties as preservation resources.

Vogel pointed out that in addition to the historic homes, a number of landscape features appear to meet the minimum criteria for consideration as contributing resources. These include: public open spaces designed and developed for outdoor recreation (Browndale and Dwight Williams parks), circulation networks related to the original plat and development plan (public streets, sidewalks, “islands”), original plat boundary demarcations delineating areas of ownership and land use (lot lines and subdivision boundaries), and historic vegetation (specimen boulevard and park trees, trees pre-dating Country Club platting, relic elms, catalpas). For preservation planning purposes, Mr. Vogel recommended treating the Browndale Bridge and Edina Mills Archaeological Site as separate heritage resources, although they are situated (partially) within the district boundaries.

Regarding the Plan of Treatment revisions, Mr. Vogel stood by his earlier recommendation that no Certificates of Appropriateness should be approved for demolition of any contributing resource in the Country Club District. Demolition of noncontributing homes would be permitted.

Regarding the guidelines for new construction in the Plan of Treatment, Vogel recommended that the Board retain the preference for period revival style (“Eclectic”) design in new homes because Colonial, Tudor, etc. dominate the aesthetic character of the district. While every effort should be made to prevent teardowns of contributing resources, Mr. Vogel added that he saw no reason not to allow teardowns of noncontributing properties, provided that the new construction is compatible with the predominant architectural character of the district.

Regarding the definitions of *demolition* and *new construction*, Mr. Vogel recommended including *the removal, covering up, or substantial alteration of any principal historic character defining exterior feature on the principal (street) façade*; corner houses would be required to obtain Certificates of Appropriateness for work on both street elevations. The principal historic character defining features of historic homes in the District are:

- Roof shape, pitch, and height
- Front wall width, height, and cladding
- Front wall window and door openings
- Entrances, porches, vestibules, and porte-cocheres

Mr. Vogel concluded that he did not recommend expanding the COA requirement to include structural additions or exterior alterations on the rear or side elevations. The survey data compiled strongly indicate that, to a considerable extent, the street facades of historic homes are being preserved voluntarily; that in most

cases, side and rear additions do not detract from the district's historic character; and that the major threat to the district's historic integrity is from teardowns and inappropriately designed new construction, which can be effectively controlled under the current ordinance.

Mr. Vogel pointed out that later in the evening's agenda, a workshop was planned to establish criteria for determining "contributing" vs "non-contributing" homes. Due to the amount of information yet to be discussed on the agenda, he recommended that a special workshop meeting be set to address the recommendations proposed for the district's Plan of Treatment.

Board members agreed that more time should be spent than would be available during the meeting - it was agreed that a special meeting would be held on Monday, November 5th at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room.

III. COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT UTILITY/ROADWAY PROJECT:

Planner Repya reminded the Board that in 2005 a Certificate of Appropriateness (H-05-6) was issued for a Sewer, Water, and Street reconstruction project in the Country Club District. The proposed 2 year project included the following improvements:

- Mainline sanitary sewer and water main pipe replacement
- Replacement of city owned portion of individual sanitary sewer and water services
- Storm sewer pipe replacement
- Street replacement (except Bridge Street)
- Street light replacement
- Pedestrian safety improvements (crosswalks)

Conditions accompanying the approval included the following:

1. Changes shall be considered to the street at major intersections with islands to ensure vehicles come to a complete stop, and
2. Brick pavers shall be used for pedestrian crosswalks at major intersections.

After the project received Certificate of Appropriateness approval from the Heritage Preservation Board, public hearings were held by the City Council. As a result of the input from residents at the public hearings, the project was put on hold to allow for a traffic study of the Northeast section of Edina to ensure that the traffic elements included in the project would be consistent with the needs identified for the northeast quadrant of the city.

The Northeast Traffic Study was completed earlier this year, and the recommendations for traffic calming and pedestrian improvements have been added to the revised project plan moving forward at this time.

Ms. Repya advised the Board that since there are changes to the original Certificate of Appropriateness issued in 2005, a new Certificate of appropriateness will be required. She added that at this time, the revised plan would be explained to them for review and consideration, with no action to be taken. However, at the November meeting of the Board, clarification of the project will be addressed and a motion on the appropriateness of the project will be requested.

City Engineer, Wayne Houle recognized that a majority of the current HPB board members were not serving in 2005, thus he briefly retraced the history of the proposed project. Paul Pasko, the utility consultant with SEH presented a power point presentation highlighting the non-invasive methods proposed for installation of the new utility lines. He pointed out that the utility section of the proposal is relatively unchanged for the 2005 plan. Board members were pleased to see sensitivity to preserving the boulevard trees inherent in the plan.

Addressing the traffic and safety improvements proposed for the project, Engineer Houle explained that the proposal is part of the Northeast East Edina Transportation Study. The major goals of the plan include:

- Reducing diversion of traffic through the neighborhood
- Keeping vehicle speeds in neighborhood at, or below the posted speed limit
- Enhancing pedestrian/non-motorized travel and safety

Mike Kotila, traffic consultant with SEH presented the proposed traffic calming and pedestrian improvements recommended for the district. Major changes identified in the plan include:

- Speed Humps at major entrances to the district.
- Realigned intersections
- Choker or street narrowing at intersections
- Raised and brick crosswalks
- Median island added to south end of Wooddale Ave.

Board members briefly discussed the proposed changes to the traffic/pedestrian patterns in the district. All agreed that the proposal is a step in the right direction to addressing the neighborhoods traffic concerns.

Several questions arose relative to the signage required for some of the changes. Concern was expressed relative to the bright neon yellow signs typically used at pedestrian crosswalks and paint identifying speed hump locations. Engineer

Houle stated that he was not sure if there was a legal requirement for the signage, or if the city had any leverage to reduce the number and color of signs installed. However, Houle promised to consult the City Attorney and report back at the November meeting.

A suggestion was also made that a sign could be installed at the entrances to district identifying it as a historic neighborhood and advising that "traffic safety measures are in place" might be a good compromise to a proliferation of signs that could be required. Houle agreed that was a suggestion worth considering.

Preservation Consultant Vogel advised the Board that the proposed changes to the traffic/pedestrian plan are not subject to the HPB review, however determining the appropriateness of materials and signage related to the improvements are areas that should be addressed.

IV. NATIONAL PRESERVATION CONFERENCE FIELD SESSION: Recap

Consultant Vogel recapped the highlights of the October 4th National Trust tour of Edina. The weather was perfect for 23 conference attendees from all corners of the country. From the Mayor's welcome greeting as they entered the city to the final farewell at Southdale Center, a good time was had by all. Board members Kojetin, Rofidal and Blemaster participated in the tour; and each shared their favorite memories with the Board.

Members Rofidal and Blemaster were both very impressed with the Cahill School and Grange Hall pointing out that the structures are so well preserved, and the school marm's presentation made one feel they were back on "Little House on the Prairie".

Chairman Kojetin was pleased with the luncheon put on by the Historical Society at the Edina Historical Museum. Not only did everyone enjoy a tasty Minnesota-style lunch, but they also were able to enjoy the current Edina Fire and Police exhibit.

Mr. Vogel and Planner Repya agreed that the tour was a worthwhile venture which can be offered to interested groups in the future. No formal action was taken.

V. PENTAGON PARK AUAR REPORT:

Consultant Vogel explained that as part of a potential redevelopment of the property, the City's Director of Planning, Cary Teague asked that he conduct a preliminary heritage resources assessment of the Pentagon Park of Edina office complex located at Highway 100 and 77th Street West. The purpose of this investigation was to identify and gather information on potential heritage preservation resources in the Gateway Study Area.

Vogel reported that the Pentagon Park office complex comprises sixteen freestanding buildings that were constructed in phases between 1963 and 1970.

The multi-tenant office park is designed to house up to approximately 300 tenants and incorporate a wide range of space types, including offices, lobbies, conference rooms, rest rooms, mechanical and service areas, restaurants, banks, postal and copy services, vending areas, daycare, and small shops. The office park's primary amenity, the Fred Richards Executive Golf Course, is located outside of the Gateway Study Area boundaries.

Vogel explained that he was unable to verify the accuracy of the statement, which appears on the Wayzata Properties webpage, that Pentagon Park represents “the first planned office park in the Twin Cities.” (A recent article in *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal* refers to it as “one of the first corporate campuses in the Twin Cities”; it is not mentioned in Gebhard and Martinson’s *Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota* [1977] or Scott and Hess’ *History and Architecture of Edina* [1981].) According to the National Building Museum, the General Motors Technical Center at Warren, Michigan, was the first modern suburban office park in the country. Designed by the Finnish American father-and-son architectural team of Eliel and Eero Saarinen, the 25-building, 330-acre facility was designed in 1949-51 and built in 1955-56. Like the Pentagon Park buildings, the GM Tech Center is a Modernist composition dominated by low-rise “Miesian” style buildings, abundant parking, and landscape amenities. The Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company (3M) headquarters on I-94 in Maplewood, designed by Ellerbe Architects and built in the late 1950’s, would appear to have a good claim to the title of first *corporate* office park in the Twin Cities and is also an example of Modernist architecture. It may well be that Edina’s Pentagon Park represents the first *speculative* office park development in the Twin Cities—more intensive research will be required to clarify this historical association.

Pentagon Park was designed and built by Rauenhorst Construction, a company founded by 25-year-old Gerald A. Rauenhorst in 1953. It was one of the company’s biggest early projects, along with the Normandale Center Industrial Park (1961-70). In 1982 Rauenhorst Construction became Opus Corporation, one of the largest real estate development companies in the country.

Consultant Vogel explained that for a building or group of buildings to qualify for designation as an Edina Heritage Landmark it must meet one of the landmark eligibility criteria by being associated with an important historic context and retaining historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance. Built between 1963 and 1970, the Pentagon Park property certainly meets the minimum requirements for consideration as a heritage resource. The buildings physically and spatially comprise a specific environment shaped by historical processes of land use. Architecturally, the buildings are the product of the dissemination of the Modern or “International” style that dominated commercial architecture from the early 1950’s through the late 1970’s.

Mere association with a particular period or architectural style is not enough for Pentagon Park to qualify as historically significant: it must be shown to have been significant in commercial or architectural history. Contextually, it relates to the broad theme of postwar suburban development delineated in the City of Edina Historic Context Study (which provides the framework for identifying and evaluating heritage resources within the city limits). Although office park was not specifically identified as a significant heritage property type in the historic context study, the general theme of Modern style commercial architecture is recognized as one aspect of the postwar suburban built environment. Unlike the National Register of Historic Places, which disqualifies buildings less than 50 years old from consideration unless they are of “exceptional” importance, the city’s landmark code sets no arbitrary restrictions on how old a property must be before it can be considered a heritage resource. For planning purposes, the City uses 1974 as the terminal date for the historic context dealing with suburban development. The Pentagon Park property falls well within the chronological limits of “The Suburban Landscape” study unit.

While it clearly possesses the defined characteristics required to represent the theme of suburban commercial development, it is unlikely that Pentagon Park represents the sole surviving example of a 1960’s office complex in Edina—comparison with other, historically-related properties will be essential for determining its preservation value. It is certainly not the best surviving example of Modern style commercial architecture in the city, though its association with the early career of professional engineer/real estate developer Gerald A. (Gerry) Rauenhorst, the founding chairman of Opus Corporation, may be significant as well.

Vogel further observed that with respect to the draft AUAR, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) inventory database for historical and architectural resources is not considered a reliable indicator of the presence or absence of significant cultural resources within a given area. While it is true that the Gateway Study Area contains no properties that have been listed in or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the reason for this would appear to be obvious: until the present investigation, no one has even looked for these resources on the ground. Given that the developer’s own website refers to the Pentagon Park property as “the first planned office park in the Twin Cities,” even declaring that it “has achieved virtual landmark status within the community,” one wonders why the AUAR preparers did not undertake even a perfunctory assessment of the project’s effects on potential heritage preservation resources.

Mr. Vogel recommended that the potential heritage value of the buildings be given proper consideration during the development planning process. At a minimum, more intensive survey is needed to provide the information needed to fully evaluate its historical and architectural significance. This will require a close and careful look at the property to identify all heritage resources within the area of

project effects, detailed inspection of the individual buildings, and thorough documentation of their physical history. Vogel added that he would like to do more research on the history of office parks in the Twin Cities area to better determine how Pentagon Park represents the property type and to develop a better perspective on the potential significance of being “the first” example of the type.

Given the rising level of preservation interest in heritage resources from the “recent past,” the SHPO could be expected to require intensive survey and mitigation of adverse effects if any future project involving the Pentagon Park locality would require compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act or the National Historic Preservation Act. (Any projects using Community Development Block Grants, State Aid transportation funds, or other federal assistance would be subject to SHPO review and compliance.)

Assuming that all or part of the Pentagon Park office complex will eventually give way to redevelopment, several mitigation options are available to avoid complete loss. Before demolition occurs, the tower and the other office buildings should be permanently recorded with archival-quality drawings, photographs, and written data so that a body of information will remain about them. As a matter of policy, the Heritage Preservation Board has adopted the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for historical and architectural documentation, which provide an appropriate format for recordation products. (The same mitigation standards used in National Register of Historic Places program). It may also be appropriate to salvage some architectural elements for curation in a museum.

Board members briefly discussed the report, finding it interesting that while the owners of Pentagon Office Park boast about being the 1st office park in the state, no heritage research had been done on the site prior to Mr. Vogel’s report.

Mr. Vogel explained that he presented the report to the Board for information; no action being required at this time. He added that he would keep them posted if the Heritage Preservation Board should need to get involved.

VI. DEMOLITION OF FIRE STATION NO. 1:

Consultant Vogel explained that Fire Station No. 1 was demolished earlier this year and a new fire station is being constructed on the site. He recommend that it would be a very good idea for the Heritage Preservation Board to have an opportunity to weigh in on the historic significance of City buildings when they are being considered for demolition.

Chairman Kojetin agreed that would be a very good policy. He recalled that when the old City Hall was being considered for demolition, the collective memories of those who had worked for the City for many years had some trouble remembering

what buildings preceded the soon to be demolished structure. It would have been very helpful to have a record of the bygone structures.

Planner Repya stated that she felt sure the process of documenting the history of city buildings would be well received by city staff. She offered to report back to the Board regarding city buildings which might be considered for demolition or replacement. The Board agreed that was a good idea. No formal action was taken.

VII. COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT WORKSHOP: Establishing criteria for determining “contributing” and “noncontributing” Homes

Continued until November 5, 2007, 7:00 p.m.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: None

IX. CONCERN OF RESIDENTS: None

X. CORRESPONDENCE:

Member Rofidal announced that the City will be holding community meetings at the elementary schools to discuss the update to the City's Comprehensive Plan. A schedule of the meetings was presented to the Board and Mr. Rofidal encouraged his fellow board members to attend one of the meetings. Planner Repya thanked Mr. Rofidal for his support of the Comprehensive Plan process and also encouraged the Board to attend one of the meetings.

**XI. NEXT MEETING DATE: November 5, 2007 – Special Meeting
November 13, 2007 – Regular Meeting**

XII. ADJOURNMENT 9:45 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,
*Joyce Repya***